Pug and Carrington

By Mildred Cram.

Illustrated by F. C. Yohn.

TO bs born a gentleman is one thing. To remain one is another. Carrington, of Cammarillo's revolutionary forces, might be said to have fallen from grace. You can guess how far he had fallen when you know that the dark-skinned, straw-hatted little men called him the ragazza, by which they meant that he was six feet four of concentrated ferocity. There was nothing girlish about Carrington except his nickname.

Mounted on a skinny American horse he loped along the seaboard trail with the Liberator's sweating army. An expert might have detected Yankee outlines beneath the greasy sombrero, the plaid shirt, the corduroy trousers tucked into high boots. To the average eye the ragazza was as racially nondescript as his companions, who were one-fourth Italian, one-fourth Spanish, one-fourth Tapadas and the rest nameless.

The horse belonged to that great composite relative, Uncle Sam. Carrington had first flung his long legs across the sorrel's back in McAllen, Texas. He was a cavalryman, a loose-mouthed, gum-chewing, arrogant son of Satan even then. Born a gentleman, his earliest ambition was to be a renegade. He achieved this simple desire during a border raid not far from the Rio Grande. A little band of Mexicans rushed a settlement, shooting and killing where they could, and while Carrington's crowd was cleaning up one end of the village he galloped to the other and escaped across the plain, riding neck to neck with those red-handed, long-waisted little heathen whose way of life appealed to him.

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WITHIN a year the line of his jaw had grown longer and leaner. His lips were fuller beneath a little back mustache. He wore silver spurs, a silver cord around the crown of his hat, and forgot to wash. Only his eyes were unchanged—ice-blue eyes set too close together. No Mexican could match Carrington's eyes; they marked him gringo and shut certain doors in his face. He might juggle with the unspeakable patois of the arid lands, but he did not know the open sesame to a Mexican's heart. Presently he felt himself baffled, sore, alone. So he wandered farther south, since old Mother Rio Grande sat across the sill of home.

There are men who endure danger, disappointment, heat, cold, disease and despair for the sake of some duty, sustained by honor and faithful to an ideal. The ragazza had courage but he knew nothing of fidelity. His reasons for living were raw and ugly. It was only natural that he should drift into the ways of those little dark men who fight for loot and for the love of fighting. Carrington and his sorrel by devious ways got to South America, where, for pay, they endured heat and cold, hunger, discomfort, disease and despair on soil which was not their own, for causes never destined to be theirs.

The ragazza cared nothing for political intrigue. A war was to him a form of amusement. Like a hired picador, he risked his neck for so much and so much. He pinned any old flag to his breast—be it the green and white of Concordia, the purple and gold of Corderilla, the scarlet and orange of Minorca Grande. He carried a pocketful of queer, foreign medals and used them for bribes as occasion required. He had only one love—the sorrel. And one fear—that he might meet the men he left behind when he galloped toward the Rio Grande, neck to neck with his chosen brothers. Carrington was a cool hand, but he shivered with fear whenever he thought of that possible encounter. He was an outcast, and knew it. Some day he was going back to take his medicine, and he knew that, too.

In the meantime he had sold his allegiance to the Liberator of Magella. For so much and so much he had agreed to fight Cammarillo's battles, obey Cammarillo's orders and, if necessary, die for Cammarillo beneath the red-hot sun and the blazing skies of Magella.

"It is easy pickings," Cammarillo said to him in the vernacular. "Practically, the thing is done. Diego's government needs only one slight push to send it sprawling face-down in the dust. His army is gorged with good food, dizzy with sleep and fat with pleasure. They have taken it to the south for maneuvers. Maneuvers! I ask you, ragazza mia, can you maneuver a stuffed capon?"

The ragazza spat through the open window of the Liberator's headquarters and shook his head. "Are you slaughtering this capon for love of country?" he asked, fixing Cammarillo with his ice-blue eyes.

"Yes. And no. I do not know whether I am right in supposing that you, too, despise the Americans?"

Carrington jerked his shoulders. "I have no family history," he said, "and no preferences."

"Bene. Bueno. Very good. Then you are spared the sort of hatred that drives men to dare anything. I love Magella, but I hate the Americans more. They have let their greedy eyes fall on this rich land. A whole continent was not enough; they must send their longfaced chewers of gum to take what does not belong to them. First the mines of the Santa Christina; then the Marias. As if that were not enough, they buy Diego's cabinet and finance the royalist party."

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CAMMARILLO'S eyes glittered. He wiped his mouth with the back of his hand and Carrington saw the telltale conformation of his palm, stamped with the Tapadas breadth and tinted cinnamon in contrast to the dark brown of wrist and forearm.

"And now the railroad! What next? They have built a bridge over the canon. God in heaven! I will destroy it."

"If you defeat the royalists, you will still have to deal with the United States."

"For a handful of dead men? They will send a gunboat and I will prove to them that all is well. Street riots. A change of government. A few Americans foolish enough to expose themselves. Ragazza mia, you know nothing of diplomacy."

Carrington laughed and rose to his feet, jerking at his trousers with the characteristic gesture of his kind. You are a great little man," he said in English, "but you will dangle at the end of a rope one day." Then in the bilingual speech of Magella he added: "Diplomacy, I get you. But mind that you don't tantalize 'em with too much of it. Diplomacy kicks like a mule, amigo."

When the Liberta had sailed, the rest of Cammarillo's army took the seaboard trail toward Magella—a long line of bobbing sombreros, glinting rifle barrels, laden pack mules, gun carriages, slatternly women, barefooted children, live chickens and goats. Clouds of yellow dust hung above the caravan. Far in advance Cammarillo rode surrounded by his officers. And among them was Carrington whose fate it was to go always south, away from the cool winds and clear skies of his own country into the burning sands and tangled forests of alien lands.

"Practically, it is done," Cammarillo said.

But there was something he had not reckoned on—the honor of men. A terrible word—honor—when it is spoken by those who put their faith in it.

Three days' march to the south a few people were aware of the coming of the half-breed menace and his army. A whisper had gone around. Cammarilo was on the oose again, and if he had his way the decent beginnings of the royalist government would turn out to be very bad ends indeed. The Fairchild Company, Bowling Green got a wire which made old man Fairchild grit his teeth.

A copper-colored bandit with silver rings on his thumb threatened to overthrow the pretty work of engineers, bankers, mining experts and political psychologists, as a child destroys a house of blocks. Old man Fairchild wired: "Hold on," but by the time the cable companies had transmited the laconic message Cammarillo's army had had its first encounter with Fairchild's men at the canon bridge.

The labor contractors and workmen were all natives, but the burden of the undertaking had fallen on that handful of engineers who had come down from the north to assume enormous responsibility and unremitting toil for two years. There had been no glory about the work and much that was thankless. A bridge was slung across the wide, nearly dry bed of the canon river. The canon walls were scarred and pitted, reinforced, burdened with the great arch of iron and steel. Cranes shrieked and snorted, lifting plates and girders into place. The great granite flanks of the Christinas echoed to the devilish clatter of riveters, stone dumps, donkey engines, screeching tackle, pulleys and steam drills. The village which sprang up in the river bed was administered by those men who were responsible both for the strength of the piers, the resistance of the spurs, the endurance of the span and the morals and welfare of the workers. There had been riots and strikes, epidemics, mysterious panics—things to try the patience and break the heart. The sun was red-hot; the white river bed steamed; the choked forest, dwelling place of brilliant birds, outlandish apes and snakes, hemmied the little settlement about like a moat. Often the men were sick for home. But there was no limit to the work that had to be done, no limit to endurance, patience, faith, determination. Now and then some man was brought to headquarters with his arm snapped in two places or his skull neatly cracked. But the legs of the great bridge grew under it until the river bed was straddled. Then, and only then, did the engineers dare to take a deep breath and to smile.

"Practically," said Cammarillo to his officers, as they loped down the seaboard trail toward Magella, "the thing is done! We have only to attack the bridge at the head of the Indian trail. I know a way into the canon from above. While we are destroying the bridge settlement, the Liberta will put our 2,000 men ashore at Magella. They will prepare the city for us. Eh, mico mio?" Carrington, nicknamed the ragazzo, shifted his gum-cud from one cheek to the other, but he said nothing.

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THE iberator smiled. "We shall have no trouble with the workmen, since they have been too long under the heel of those damned oppressors of free people, those damned stealers of land, those—a thousand pardons—damned compatriots of yours, Car-r-ington."

The ragazza's eyes narrowed; what had been ice-blue became strangely like two small flames burning in the dark brown of his face. He touched the sorrel with his spurs and the old horse, wheeling, sped back along the straggling line of nationalists. "Going north," Carrington thought. But the madness passed. He paused, laughed, wiped his streaming face, and trotted back to the liberator's side.

"s you were saying—those compatriots of mine——"

"We will have their bridge before noon tomorrow!"

That night Cammarillo's army of picturesque ragmuffins turned away from the coast and entered the mouth of the canon where the shallow river, freed of the confining walls, spread fan-wise and sought the sea. Scouts from Columbia, creeping along the roof of the canon, saw the flicker of campfires in the river bed and, speeding back to the mines, broke the news to McCarthy. What McCarthy said stung the souls and the wills of his workmen. The village hummed; flares and lanterns stabbed the darkness with erratic flashes; there was a subdued murmur of voices, a fierce shuffling of bare feet. McCarthy's men followed him down the mountains to the great bridge, leaving their women with old Padre Antonio in the church.

So it happened that when Cammarillo struck the first blow he found the Americans ready. The bridge was theirs, inch by inch, foot by foot, for the glory of the job and the honor of that composite relative who listens to no excuses and recognizes no extenuating circumstances. It was all but finished. In a few weeks President Diego was to have opened the railroad, breaking his Latin eloquence against the prow of the undertaking. Thereafter locomotives would thunder across the canon, and the names of the bridge builders would be forgotten. But the bridge itself would endure, an ugly monument to fidelity.

"I'll dynamite the piers," the chief said, snuggling his rifle against his shoulder, "before I'll let any half-breed bandit scare me into surrendering."

He was spared the trouble. A Nationalist bullet caught him as he hurried along one of the temporary footpaths of his bridge and he toppled into the white river bed still clutching his rifle.

McCarthy's men crouched in the skeleton work, hung in the trolleys, the overhead cranes, the towers; two of them, nervous in that storm of bullets, took refuge in one of the locomotives and fired steadily and gleefully from the cab windows: The engineers, rather appalled by the chief's sacrifice, scattered to the eastern bank, where they tried to hold their conglomerate army together. Cammarillo was having his own way in the settlement. The tinder-box huts went up in a cloud of oily smoke; the tool sheds followed; then the American quarter—the chief's house, the offices, the barracks. From the bridge the Liberator was plainly visible, dashing among his troops mounted on a white horse. A tall fellow in a red shirt—Carrington, the ragazza—led the attack against the eastern bank.

"That's no Dago," McCarthy remarked, taking careful aim. The shot went wild, and McCarthy, glancing with surprise at his right hand, found it drilled clean through the palm. "Injun," he said bitterly, "bad Indian!"

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ONE by one the native workmen dropped away. Theirs was neither the honor nor the glory of the bridge. They were tired of sweat and toil, the everlasting vigilance of contractors and foremen. The work was all but finished. Ebbene! It belonged to Magella. Better that the Americans were told "hands off" and sent back whence they came. Fitters and riveters dropped their rifles and rushed by hundreds into the burning village. Cammarillo rounded them up and sent them forward again against the eastern bank. They went, without a glance at the man who for two years had directed their destiny. He lay face down in the shallow stream, true to his breed and his faith, true to his bridge. It was well that he did not know what happened then.

McCarthy and the railroad engineers could hold the workmen no longer. The Indians broke first and slipped over to the enemy. The rest followed—Sicilians, Portuguese and Spaniards attracted by the promises of loot and easy victory down in the city Magella. The Americans were swept back to the head of the Indian trail; some of them died there and the rest were captured. Twenty men are no barrier against an army.

Carrington galloped back to look at the little group of dusty, blood-stained prisoners.

"Ah," said McCarthy, who was holding one end of a handkerchief between his teeth while he wrapped the other around his injured hand, "here's the bad Injun! Proud sons of Columbia, behold our fellow-countryman!"

The ragazza pretended not to have understood, but his body stiffened in the saddle and his eyes wavered before the big Irishman's stare.

"You are very funny fools, you Americans," he said in Spanish. Fishing in his pockets for a cigarette, he tossed one to McCarthy, who promptly put his foot over it and ground it into the dust. Then Carrington pivoted the sorrel and rushed after Cammarillo, scattering the little brown men before him like startled sparrows.

The nationalists were already pouring through the mouth of the trail and bolting across the narrow plain toward the city.

"What are you going to do with your prisoners?" Carrington demanded.

Cammarillo shrugged. He lifted his hand to stroke his mustache, and again the ragazza saw the cinnamon palm which branded the Liberator half Tapadas. And something turned over in the inmost soul of Carrington, ex-cavalryman. Now, henceforth and forever he was done with little brown men who fight for loot. He had looked into the eyes of men of his own race, and what he saw there made him know that the time had come to take his medicine. He would ride no further south. If he died, he would at least fall with his face toward the Rio Grande and home.

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FATE was playing chess that beautiful day in the tragic little republic of Magella. There were two moves in the royalists' favor. The fight at the bridge had used up Cammarillo's morning. He had not expected engineers and cub bridge builders to part so reluctantly with what was theirs. So President Diego's army of stuffed capons had an extra three hours in which to hurry down from the hills into Magella. They were there before the Liberator passed the Arena Goldoni. All the loyal royalists—and there were a good many—retired into their houses, closed the shutters and sneaking out on the roof tops lay flat, hugging their rifles and cursing the hot sun. Nor was that all. When the Liberator saw the Liberta lying on Sand Island he howled, too. "That Signor Pug is to blame," he said.

"Signor Pug?"

"He is another of those damned compatriots of yours, ragazza mia. When I lay hands on him he will pay."

"Who is he?"

"He is the son of Fairchild and nephew of the devil."

"How should I know him?"

"By his smile. Also, he is pronto with a gun. Also, he rides like a Tapadas. Also, he is my enemy and therefore yours. Shoot him, amigo, before you pause to ask his name, for he is as quick as a lizard and as dangerous as a snake. You see with your own eyes the Liberta in the harbor—broken in two! You may thank him for that."

They were approaching the outskirts of the city. Carrington smiled and addressed his employer in English: "Thy ways are not my ways; thy people are not my people. So be it." He shot three times at Cammarillo's horse, and while the astonished Liberator scrambled out of the dust where he had fallen, the ragazza whispered to the sorrel and was off.

The pickets in the Via Nazionale very naturally mistook him for a nationalist, and he dodged into an alley way to escape the shower of bullets that zipped and hummed and whined all around him.

"Welcome home," he whispered with a twisted grin.

Behind him he heard the first of the fighting in the Via Nazionale—a machine gun spitting rhythmically from the roof of the Arena Goldoni, followed by the angry bark of rifles. Carrington was between the devil and the deep sea. He dismounted, left the sorrel, and ran forward along the alley way.

"It's no good," a voice said above him. "I've got you covered."

He glanced up. A young man in dirty linen clothes was lying full length in the eaves of a one-story house. The ragazza made a quick motion, the other's revolver spoke and the ragazza's hat, drilled through the crown, leaped in midair.

"Pronto with a gun!" Carrington shouted. "That's you! I don't know the countersign, but you're Signor Pug."

"Americano?"

"Yes, by heck."

Pug dropped into the street and very solemnly they shook hands.

"You're from the mines?"

Carrington lied. "Yes."

"What happened up there?"

"Cammarillo cut through, captured the outfit and is surrounding the city."

"What's your name?"

"Carrington."

"Is that your horse?"

"Yes."

"Can she carry two of us?"

"Try her."

"Then get aboard and ride like hell to the Piazza Independenza. I'm coming, too."

The sorrel tipped into the Via Nazionale again, and with cracking hostrils sped the length of the city. Only now the rifles on the roof-tops were silent and groups of royalist soldiers, crouched behind walls and temporary barricades, shouted encouragement as the plucky sorrel passed.

"The palace. Don't stop for the sentry."

Carrington obeyed, and the panting animal, clattering and sliding on the smooth paving of the court, plunged straight through into the garden at the back of the president's palace. Pug dismounted, beckoned to Carrington, and together they rushed indoors, climbed a flight of marble stairs carpeted thickly with red velvet, and came upon President Diego himself, waiting, with a good deal of dignity, for whatever might happen to Magella. Mercedes clung to his arm and several frock-coated, white-whiskered government officials stared solemnly at the ragged, dirty American and at the ragazza, ex-cavalryman, ex-bandit, ex-gentleman. The room was very still, aloof from the heat and dust of the city. There were glittering chandeliers made of multi-colored prisms, and big red velvet chairs with gold arms, and acres of polished floors. Just behind the stately old president Carrington beheld a monstrous oil painting, done in the best rococo manner—Diego mounted on a charger, haloed with cupids and angels and wearing the seven-starred order of office. Diego himself was having difficulty in maintaining his heroic manner.

"Signor Pug, we have done our best. Cammarillo is already in the city."

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PUG spoke gently, his eyes not on Diego but on Mercedes.

"Beyond doubt," Pug said, "the matter is serious. One thing I have done—the Liberta is aground on the Isola di Sabbia. As for Magella—have you no faith in your army?"

Diego's shoulders sagged. "I have no faith in any one."

"Then you cannot expect allegiance."

Miss Diego flushed and squeezed her father's arm. "He is right, papa."

Diego's eyes dropped. "What do you want me to do?"

"You will be safe at the American consulate. Cammarillo will think twice before he fires on that flag."

Diego hesitated. In the sudden silence within the room the sound of firing was distinctly audible—the sharp rattle of musketry, the expressionless, bored coughing of machine guns, and over it all, like drum notes in a martial symphony, the brass boom of the big guns at San Martino. Diego bowed.

"Ebbene, Mr Fairchild. Only permit me to say that I am not afraid—of anything."

Thereafter things moved quickly for the ragazza. No one had offered to pay him for his services, but he toiled like a slave for the exuberant Signor Pug. No flag was pinned to his breast as a reminder of his duty. No medals were offered, or thought of. Surreptitiously he rubbed his fingers over his face, as if by that simple process he could erase his old identity.

Pug knew a way across the roof-tops to the consulate, and that way the president of the republic went—much against his will. The manner of his going was excessively undignified. Pug pulled and the ragazza pushed, while Miss Diego, speechless with mirth, carried her papa's silk hat and bamboo cane.

"This is not a war," she said, "it is a circus."

Later she changed her mind. But it was hard to believe, up there on the sunny roof-tops, that men were fighting and dying in the streets. Yet nothing stood between President Diego and Cammarillo's firing squad except the doubtful resistance of the royalist forces. Pug breathed more easily when he had left the Diegos at the consulate. The president sank down in the consul's favorite home-made rocking-chair and fixed his somber eyes on a lithographed portrait of T. R. which hung upon the wall beneath two crossed flags.

Pug and the ragazza, not pausing for heroic farewells, slipped out into the deserted Via della Pace and scuttled off to join the royalists.

The nationalists had spread themselves in a wide half-moon about the skirts of the city. The sound of their rifles was like distant hand-clapping—a harmless sort of noise that struck terror in the hearts of the barricaded civilians. Nothing much was done about it in the city itself. A detachment of loyal cavalry, hidden in the big, ruined Arena Goldoni, poured through the gates and rode into Cammarillo's advance columns, yelling and wheeling like dervishes. It was a dusty, grimmace while it lasted, but Diego's pretty cavalrymen, mounted on sleek horses and wearing too much gold braid on their well-tailored uniforms, melted away before the Liberator's barefooted savages.

"Like throwing a lamb chop to a pack of wolves," Pug said when he saw three of the sleek horses, riderless, galloping back toward barracks.

The wolves came on. Therefore the rest of Diego's army lay down on its stomach and waited, behind walls, barricades and gateways, for the proper moment. They had not long to wait. A group of the little brown men appeared at the head of the Via Nazionale, their conical straw hats bobbing as they ran forward. And a tremor ran along the line of prostrate royalists. A rifle spoke from a roof-top, the straw-hatted ones wavered, then came on, dodging into doorways, dropping briefly on one knee, rising, running as if the devil were at their heels, dropping again——

Pug grinned at the ragazza. They had wriggled out into the middle of the street and sprawled side by side, peering through a gap in that flimsy barricade of mattresses and overturned tables filched from the Cafe Albion. The ragazza's eyes were steady, but he kept licking his lips with the tip of his tongue and mumbling under his breath.

"Come on, come on, you little black sons of Satan! I'm in your pay no longer. Come one step farther and I'll settle your hash. You daren't! You daren't, you dog-stealers, you low-brow, evil-smelling heathen. Come on! You daren't."

But they came. Cammarillo had promised them loot; he had promised to be in the palace before dawn—president, giver of awards, administrator of all the Yankee dollars in the coffers of the state. It is amazing what men will endure for the sake of gold. There were ragged peons in Cammarillo's army who aspired to great things under the new regime. So, stumbling in the thick dust, burned by the fiery rays of the sun, punished by the flick and sting and shocking impact of royalist bullets, they came on.

"Take that," said Carrington, squinting fearfully, "and that. And that!" He rolled over on his back and laughed aloud. "Promise me one thing, Signor Pug," he begged. "Give me the Liberator. You have two things to fight for—love and the Fairchild property in Magella. With me it's a simple matter of atonement—and self-respect. Let me pick off the Liberator with my own hand."

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PUG laughed. But his reply was drowned by the coughing of all the royalist rifles at once. A shout went up. The street was full of men where a moment before there had been only two or three. A huge, umbrella-shaped puff of smoke smirched the spotless sky—proof that the revolutionists had fired the suburbs. The street in front of the barricade was minced and shredded by volleys that seemed to the defenders to be spit at them from four sides. Here and there a royalist grunted, waved his arms, put his legs in oddly contorted attitudes and rolled over dead. No one could tell what was happening to Cammarillo's men, for the dust of combat settled like a smoke-screen between the armies. Suddenly demoralized by the confusion, the royalist soldiers broke and ran, scattering to the Piazza. Pug and the ragazza gave tongue, but their arguments were lost in the tumult of shouting and cursing.

In the Piazza they rallied again and a tattered, bloodstained citizen, reeling up to Pug, gave him the Magellan flag, saluted and crawled away on all fours to die in decent privacy beneath the Cathedral arcade. Carrington hitched at his belt and spat triumphantly.

"Guess it's your war, after all," he remarked.

"It was wished on me. Glory be to God, there's Gonelli. Tell him to take his men out through the San Pedro gate and let 'em push Cammarillo from behind—into the sea, if he can. We'll hold 'em here. You go with him."

Carrington saluted and went, stopping only to retrieve the patient sorrel from the garden of the presidential palace. After that it was a case of two armies playing blindman's buff in the crowded alley ways and narrow, sunbaked streets of the city. Now the royalists were "it," now the nationalists. Cammarillo tagged Pug's men in the Piazza and was chased a quarter of a mile for his pains. The Liberator sat down, panting, on the Esplanade, considered his wounds and cursed in three tongues and sixteen dialects. Then he directed his men to loot the water-front shops and saloons—an old trick, calculated to revive brute courage. They broke into Franchi's, wrecked the bar, splintered the mirrors, murdered the proprietor with sundry details and accessories not fit for publication, drank everything in sight and erupted once more into the open air, stone drunk, blind mad and ready for anything.

"The palace!" Cammarillo shouted, brandishing his heavy sword.

"Abbasso Diego!"

That inarticulate shout reached Papa Diego in the American consulate. Cold chills chased themselves from the crown of his snow-white head along his spine and back again, but he sighed, fixed his eyes on the lithographed portrait of T. R., and, raising his glass full of the consul's home-made mint julep, pledged: "My protectors, defenders of democracy, friends of Magella!"

There were only two of them. Pug was holding the Piazza against the renewed onrushes of Cammarillo's hired agitators. The ragazza, hand in hand with Gonelli, who was weeping like a child over the scarcity of machine guns, pushed slowly down the Via Nazionale, the very ground which had been fought over in the morning. The street was littered with sombreros, coats, empty cartridge cases, discarded bayonets and water bottles. A cyclone might have passed, bearing in its heart a storm of steel sleet—the plaster walls of the houses were peppered and riddled, pock-marked with bullets.

The ragazza fought without pausing for breath. Every shot he fired was a canceled debt. Every step forward along the sunny, tragic street was a step toward the Rio Grande. He could not have explained this in so many words. Nor was the medicine too bitter to suit his taste.

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TO Carrington Signor Pug sent a runner—a scared boy who slipped over the roof tops and dropped into the ragazza's lines more dead than alive. He had a piece of very damp paper under his tongue; this having been extracted and unfolded, Carrington made out a message.

"Cammarillo is attacking the consulate. Bring your men through the Via della Pace. Fairchild."

"Brief and to the point," said the ragazza, mopping his brow with the sleeve of his red shirt. "But not so easy of execution. This Signor Pug is a persuasive fellow. Let's go."

What happened then was too simultaneous for the purposes of fiction. An impartial angel, hovering over the tropic republic with a motion-picture camera, might possibly have caught the details of that afternoon's doings for the delectation of posterity. In Magella itself the action was too sporadic for exact chronicle. The president had disappeared. The disappointed Liberator, leading his bandits through the gold and crimson rooms of the palace, had found the royalist bird flown. So he had hacked and hewed and pushed his way across the Piazza again and edged down the Via della Pace toward the American consulate. The old Magellan eagle was within, wearing no other talisman but the detested, striped flag of another people.

Hearing of this, the Magellans lost patience; one by one they left the roof tops, came out of the walled gardens and filtered into the thin royalist ranks. One civilian mob charged the esplanade and removed two hundred very drunk little brown men from the center of the stage. There were enough supes for the revolutionary drama, as it was. Another mob, led by Pug, raced headlong into the cathedral, Cammarillo's rear-guard panting at its heels. Once within the great shadowy church, the nimble Americano led the enemy a pretty dance around the high altar, up one transept and down another, finally driving the dizzy revolutionists into the cloister where they howled like trapped hyenas. Pug left them under guard and hurried to his rendezvous with Carrington.

"Who is this Carrington?" asked one who had seen the ragazza in action.

"Hanged if I know," Pug answered. "But give him elbow room."

Which was just what Carrington lacked at the moment. With Gonelli's men he was trying to clear a way into the Via della Pace. Pug bit along the outer edges, nipping at Cammarillo's army very much as a bulldog nips at a tramp. The hot sun was preparing to snuff itself out. A great, golden disc, apparently motionless, hung just above the horizon, gilding the white city, the aloof pinnacles of the Santa Christina, the tranquil sea. Beyond the wide half-moon of 'dobe houses, churches, and villas, the world was caught into the brooding silence and breathlessness of late afternoon. There was no wind. Birds sang in the gardens. The air was bitter sweet with the pungent fragrance of flowers. The impartial angel, looking down upon all this beauty, must have wondered at the passion and madness of men.

A cloud of dust and smoke hung above the city. Fires licked along the waterfront. The two armies had got themselves into an inextricable mess, and howled and cursed and smote one another and came together with fearful rushes, like men possessed. The nationalists fought for Cammarillo and loot. Cammarillo had forgotten everything in his eagerness to destroy Diego. He had forgotten that far to the north a great nation watched the tantrums of little nations, often with amusement, sometimes with suspicion, occasionally with swift, unexpected, terrifying disapproval. Cammarilo had marked his enemy. There could be no real victory for the nationalists until Diego had won his place among the martyrs of Magella. Even while the crafty liberator gave the command to fire on the consulate, he was planning a memorial to the assassinated president. He glanced once at the brilliant flag to which Diego had pinned his faith. The eyes of all the hired nationalists turned with a sidelong flash of interrogation. The liberator smiled, waved his sword, and a spurt of flame leaped from the leveled rifles of his followers toward the barred doors and windows of the consulate.

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IT was then that Miss Diego, holding her papa's hand in the consul's office, changed her mind about war being a circus. But she smiled and kissed the top of Papa Diego's snowy head and made light of the whole affair.

The consul went to the window and peered through the shutters. "When they rush," he mused, "I'll fire. At least once——"

He ducked and a bit of the wooden shutter splintered and swung loose.

"Would it be beneath my dignity," Diego demanded in a faint voice, "to lie down on the floor?"

"You owe it to your country," said Miss Diego, and lay down beside him. Her hand trembled a little, but her eyes were bright and her smile never wavered. They lay there in silence, listening to the pat-pat-pat of bullets against the walls. Now and then a shout rose from the street, an ugly, menacing shout of triumph and anticipation.

Then Signor Pug tired of nibbling at the edges and led his men into the heart of the trouble. They came together again—nationalist and royalist, maddened, dog-tired, desperate—and took terrible vengeance. Cammarillo was in the very center of the whirlpool, his horse turned round and round by that irresistible eddy of struggling men. His own were giving way. They broke and ran back along the Via della Pace. There Gonelli and the ragazza fell upon them and pushed them forward again.

The ragazza sobbed: "Come on, you cinnamon agitator, you chocolate-cream bandit! I'm heading north and nothing can stop me."

Cammarillo glanced down over the tossing sea of sombreros and saw Carrington. It was a brief vision. The liberator straightened in his saddle and fired. The shot made no sound. He glanced down at his smoking revolver with surprise, tossed it away and clapped both hands to his side. Then slowly, very slowly, he slipped sideways in his saddle and toppled to the ground. And the ragazza, coughing, twisted about three times, jerked at his collar, wavered, stumbled, and stretched himself full length in the dust of the Via della Pace. Gonelli's men surged around him and drove the nationalists out of the Via della Pace, out of the piazza, out of the San Pedro gate into the plain. And there the army of the liberator was made into the likeness of a Swiss cheese.

That night McCarthy visited the improvised hospital in the palace. Straw beds had been placed along both sides of the ballroom. Nationalist and royalist lay side by side. Some sang, some groaned, some prayed. And one, bandaged like a sore thumb, hailed the big Irishman as he passed.

"Americano," he managed to say. "I got that greaser."

"Well," I'll be damned," said McCarthy, catching sight of one ice-blue eye, "well, I'll be damned if it isn't——"

The bandaged one fumbled in the straw, found a cigarette and gave it to McCarthy, humbly, with trepidation.

McCarthy accepted the offering, lighted it, puffed with deep gratification, and smiled. "Well, I'll be damned," he whispered, "if it isn't the noble red man!"

He stretched out his one good arm and clasped the ragazza's hand. "Welcome home," he said.

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SO IT HAPPENED THAT WHEN CAMMARILLO STRUCK THE FIRST BLOW HE FOUND THE AMERICANS READY.

HUNGER

By Henri Duvernois

Translated From the French by WILLIAM L. McPHERSON.

"MY DEAR GODFATHER," said the youthful Leon to M. Capriel, "I see that you are ready to go out to dinner and that I am detaining you. I shall not imitate the orientals, who wait till they get to the door before disclosing the object of their visit. I have troubles, my dear godfather—troubles of a kind you must have had, too, when you were a young man. In short, I need fifty louis."

"Put it in more familiar figures. Fifty louis, that makes how much?"

"A thousand francs."

"You don't eat with the back of your spoon, my boy."

"It is a trifle to you."

"How do you know it is?"

"You are rich."

M. Capriel meditated for a minute or two. He was an old man, obese and full blooded, with enormous hands, huge feet and a round, vulgar, sleek, smooth-shaven head, like that of a convict. He wore a strange-looking coat—a cross between a smoking jacket and a Prince Albert—and a white tie.

"You'll not get a centime from me," he declared. "After my death, everything. Till then, nothing at all. You take me for a miser. I know that people think I am a miser. But I am not. I'm afraid of dying of hunger—that's all. Does that astonish you? I have been afraid for the last forty-five years of dying of hunger. That fear has enabled me to acquire my fortune, which is a good thing, and to keep it intact, which is a still better thing."

"My dear godfather, everybody appreciates your good qualities. That's so, believe me. But it's getting late."

"Wait a minute. I am in a confidental mood. That doesn't happen often. Profit by it. You will learn something. Forty-five years ago I was about your age. But I was an orphan. And a poor looking specimen in the bargain. Not like you see me today. I have improved considerably. I was no success with the ladies, you can imagine. I didn't know how to dance the mazurka, which was the shimmy of that period. Ah! I forgot. I was a poet and an internsigeant. I said to myself: 'If it comes to the worst and I have to earn money, I shall write novels.' I had 12,000 francs, left me by my parents. Then I made the acquaintance of Alexis Rebureau."

"The metallurgist?"

* * * *

"YES. He wasn't a metallurgist then. He was a designer. Emulating Constantin Guys, he intended to become the depicter of the elegances of Paris fashion. But what a contrast! He wore frayed linen, shabby shoes and a shocking dress suit. Yet he was very keen about the good form of tilburys. Actresses' coiffures interested him and he ruined himself buying sketch books and pencils. He was a type like Privat d'Anglemont, except for the stacks of gold pieces which Privat received three times a year from his family and which he often squandered in a single night. Alexis would also have liked to serve a Pantagruelian dinner in some cabaret to all the poor women who had gone without breakfast some fast day. But he had quarreled with his father and mother.

"When one is ill-favored like me he knows how to be a friend. I became a brother to this artist, who was the sort of artist that I was poet. Alexis installed himself in my lodgings, in a mansard overlooking the central market. We laughed at the odors of fresh fish and rotting cabbages. What insouciance! My money didn't last long. But Alexis remained carefree. As for me, I was young. Ah! that evening of fate, the 12th of December, 1875."

"Did some accident happen to you?"

"The most ignoble of all. I was hungry. On the 10th of December Alexis and I had only five centimes between us. We had neither relative nor comrades on whom we could call for assistance. December is the worst of all months for borrowers. On the 10th we got along with a cake, bought for a sou—a sort of roll with a little caramel on the top of it. Two mouthfuls for each of us. We went to bed. On the 11th we failed to raise any funds. We tried in the army, but were rejected. Toward 5 o'clock that evening we had had our first spell of faintness, with a queer metallic taste on the tongue. We ate a last morsel of sugar and drank at a fountain. We were face to face with the abominable specter of starvation.

"No appetite! It is a mocking thing, appetite. We say 'I am famished' when a meal is half an hour late. We use stupidly a frightful word. Hunger, my boy, doesn't make the stomach writhe. It strikes you brutally with a club on the back of the neck. You are stunned. You can't speak.

"We stayed in bed. We dreamed, and our dreams were much alike. For Alexis a turkey with truffles, for me a leg of mutton with flageolets. We understood each other. 'How sweet it smells!' murmured Alexis, in ecstasy. And I knew well that he was talking about a turkey with truffles. I, more modest, stuck to my leg of mutton. I saw it before me, rosy, with a golden crust, the flageolets softened in an unctuous sauce. Good Lord! It was like thirst in a desert with an exasperating vision of lemon sherbet. Full-blooded people like me when they dream of eating almost have a paralytic stroke.

"The next day, at 6 o'clock in the afternoon, Alexis made me get up.

"'We are not going to starve here,' he cried. 'Come! I know slightly a certain M. Lefourgeix, who dines every night in a little place near Madeleine. We'll explain matters to him. He won't let us perish. Because, you know, Francois, I swear to you that we are going to die if we don't get something to eat.'

* * * *

"WE met M. Lefourgeix as he was entering the restaurant. At first he thought we were drunk. When he looked at us more closely he opened wide the door of the paradise and ushered us in, as you push a sick man into an apothecary's shop. He called out: 'Serve them two warm bouillons first.' The bouillon they give to mendicants! We still had a little pride. 'It isn't necessary,' Alexis stammered. But the idea of swallowing cold oysters terrified us.

"Ah! that soup! And that divine entrecote a la bourguignonne! And that cheese! And that coffee! We absorbed at the same time life and wisdom. Before everything else it was a question of never having such an experience again. Alexis renounced his design. I renounced my verses. We became what you call rich. Not rich enough to roll in a carriage, nor to buy works of art, but rich enough to eat. Since then I have never had fear of anything, except to be hungry again. I have taken precautions—all possible precautions—never to be hungry again, no matter what happens."

M. Capriel got up.

"And today, the 12th of December, I make a pilgrimage with my friend Alexis, as we have done every year for the last forty-five years. We buy a meal at the place at which we were saved. That house brings luck. It was formerly only a wine shop. Now it is a high-class restaurant. All the rest of the year I am on a diet. So is Alexis. We are paying for our privations when we were young. But tonight, farewell to our diets! Oysters Burnham, consomme, entrecote, camembert! And a little partridge au fole gras, which I forgot. And the strongest wines. Good night, my boy. Go home and dine with your parents. You don't interest me any further!"

The next day Leon was awakened by his mother, who seemed greatly upset.

"We have sad news," she said. "Your godfather died last night. The doctor advised him to be careful, to live soberly. Now, it seems that he ate enough for four people at a cabaret with his friend Rebureau. He went home ill. It's horrible. A man like that, who has earned millions, thanks to his intelligence, to die—to die of indigestion!"

And Leon thought:

"My godfather didn't die of indigestion. But if I told the truth, who would believe me. M. Francois Capriel, well known merchant, landed estate proprietor, died of hunger—died of having been hungry on the 12th of December, 1875."

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CAPITAL SIDELIGHTS

BY WILL P. KENNEDY.

The appointment of former President William Howard Taft as successor of Chief Justice Edward Douglass White on the Supreme Court bench would be appreciated by overwhelming majority of the people of the country, according to messages being received at the White House and would round out Mr. Taft's life most gratifyingly. The whole bent aptitude and ambition of Mr. Taft was toward the judicial, until President McKinley called upon him as a national duty to go to the Philippines as governor general. Taft didn't want that job, but "was shown the light," and that entirely changed his life. He never wanted to be an executive, and became chief executive. His own desire has always been for the bench, and his appointment is regarded as especially appropriate, since it was he who chose Justice White for the chief justiceship.

* * * *

Thomas W. De Lashmutt, one of the supervisors of Arlington county, Va., thought that March 4 would bring him relief from the embarrassment of being repeatedly taken for President Wilson, but still his resemblance to the recent executive is causing vexation, not only because he is frequently mistaken by tourists, but even by residents of the National Capital and some public offic